

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) joined Congressmen Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced) and George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) to introduce bipartisan legislation that calls for a review of the federal biological opinions that have significantly reduced the amount of water flowing to San Joaquin Valley farmers.

“The decision to focus solely on the export of water to the San Joaquin Valley was a wrong and shortsighted decision, and it has devastated the livelihoods of thousands of my constituents,” Congressman Costa said. “For the last 18 months, I have repeatedly said that there is not one single cause for the decline in overall Delta health or the decline in the fisheries. It was a costly failure with no definable benefit toward improving species recovery. This legislation will ensure all environmental factors are taken into account when dealing with species recovery, and not simply put the blame on my farmers, farm workers and the farm communities in our Valley.”

Specifically, the legislation calls for a “re-consultation” of the biological opinions on Salmon and Delta Smelt that have resulted in curtailments of water deliveries to the Valley. The biological opinions place unfair blame on Valley farmers and the pumps that deliver their water as the cause for declines in the Delta fish populations. The legislation would require a review of all factors affecting the survival of endangered species in the Delta, rather than simply focusing on cutting back water deliveries to the Valley.

“I have consistently maintained that the pumps are not the problem. It is both unfair and illogical to blame our farmers for all of the environmental problems facing the Delta ecosystem,” said Congressman Cardoza. “The simple fact is that there are likely multiple factors contributing to these species’ decline, including pollution and invasive species of predatory fish. It is in the best interest of all of California that we determine what these causes are and establish a comprehensive approach to addressing these issues.”

“For almost two years, we have seen environmentalists use questionable science and a tunnel-vision approach to understanding the Delta ecosystem in an effort to curtail San Joaquin Valley agriculture production — something this legislation seeks to fix.” said Congressman Radanovich. “The harsh realities of prioritizing the rights of fish above the rights of people have brought farmers to the brink of extinction during an already difficult economic environment. I’m proud to join my colleagues in an effort to try to correct some of the many fallacies promoted by the current biological opinions that are dramatically reducing Delta water deliveries to hard working Valley families.”

Under the legislation, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation would be required to

conduct an analysis of the Delta that would identify and analyze waste water discharges, toxic urban runoff, industrial discharge, major power plant water diversions and discharges, private water diversions and discharges, and invasive species.

The legislation further requires that each of the identified factors be quantified and ranked in order of its impact on the survival of the protected Delta fish.

To read the complete text of the bill, click [here](#) .